

WITCH DOCTORS DO A THRIVING BUSINESS AMONG WASHINGTON BLACKS

Washington Makers of "Magic Charms"

"Uncle" Bovey Hampden, "Voodoo" Doctor, Georgetown.
"Elias, the Hoodoo King" (E. Manuel), Jefferson and M streets.
"Prof. Prince" (Prince Hairston), palmist and card reader,
808 Four-and-a-half street southwest.
A Schenk, Seventh street, between L and M streets.

And the Devil will fetch me now in fire,
My witchcrafts to alone,
And I who have troubled the dead man's grave
Shall never have rest in my own.
—Southern, the Old Woman of Berkeley.

SUPERSTITION is on the increase in Washington.
Blacks and whites nightly slip in secret to the homes of colored "witch doctors," palmists, and "professors," there to receive charms for the working of good and evil; magic powders and love philters.

"Voodooism"—the old terrifying rites and incantations of West Africa and the West Indies, once thought to have died out among the negroes of the South—still is practiced in the Capital City, though in a modified form.

Some of the witch doctors themselves—and there are some half dozen who do a thriving business here—assert that there are more people today than there were ten years ago, who believe in the power of charms, spirits, card-reading, and in revelations through fortune-telling and palmistry.

Wealthy Whites Believers.

This superstitious belief in witchery is not confined by any means to the colored race, although there are to be found the largest number of adherents. Many white people and not a few of the cultured and wealthy in this city pass the thresholds of these colored magic-workers to help them surmount obstacles and to get advice in love affairs and business undertakings, and some even are in the habit of receiving periodical visits from them.

Go to one of the hovels of these "voodoo" doctors some evening—say that of old "Uncle" Bovey Hampden, in Georgetown—and knock at his basement door, scrawled all over with strange figures and inscriptions. "Uncle" Bovey claims not to be a "voodoo" doctor, but he is, just the same, as all his neighbors testify, in that he makes charms and determines events and gives advice after incantations before his "wheel," or "Southern jack," which is an indescribably old looking contrivance, furnished with a scale, or balance, which is popularly supposed to shift voluntarily as it deals out good luck or bad. You knock, knock, knock. Somebody stirs inside. There is a hollow "Come in," and you enter.

"Witch Doctor's" Den.

The gloom of the place and the stifling atmosphere almost overcome you. At first you can't see anybody, there is such a promiscuous pile of old iron, rags, faded carpets, tin cans, rope, and other rubbish. A little old oil stove, squatted on the floor in front of a dismal hearth, is lazily sending to the low-hanging ceiling a malodorous pyramid of smoke and printing through the perforations in the sheet iron strange, shimmering shadow pictures on the grimy walls.

All of a sudden an object huddled in a chair shifts itself.
"Is the 'witch doctor'?"
"Ebenin," said the old "Uncle" Bovey, in a tone something between a murmur and a squeak. His chair screeches as he moves, and a ruffian-haired black cat in a corner humps its scrawny back, spits raucously and glares with baleful eyes.

You can feel the hair rising along your spine by this time.
"Uncle" Bovey pokes his grizzled old head out into the area of light shed by the stove. His lips move but he doesn't appear to be saying much of anything.

"Make me a charm against a fellow that's trying to get my girl away from me, Uncle?" you ask.

"Ah done mek yo' one dats woks nohif an' souf, etc an' wex, so's dey kyan't nobody done git away from hit," he says. "My charms allers woks 'em. Ah done fix 'em so yo' kin woks 'em up to git jiz what yo' wishin' fo'."

"Haven't you got a charm ready made, that would do? I can't wait for fear that fellow will get my girl away from me in the meantime," you vouchsafe.

"Oh, Lawdy, no," replies old "Uncle" Bovey. "Ah got to mek yo' ones to yo'self, else tain't do yo' no good."

"Well, then, trot out your wheel and tell me whether I'll succeed with Jane against this fellow," you finally say.

Praying to the "Jack."

Then "Uncle" Bovey will gradually hoist himself out of his chair, totter across the room behind a curtain and bring into view his "Southern jack," which he places on a dusty old cloth-covered trunk. He will not bring it out, however, unless he has perfect confidence in your sincerity and in your intention never to expose him, for he can be hauled into Police Court and fined if he is discovered using one of these "magic" wheels. Getting money under false pretenses, the skeptical might call "Uncle" Bovey's occupation.

At length he begins to turn the

little wheel which is connected with the balance, muttering and mumbling the while. If the balance stands on one side when he has finished, you will have had luck, if on the other side you will have good luck.

The old fellow keeps murmuring incoherently to himself as he turns the wheel. Finally it stops, and the wizard gives a flying leap into the air, shouting, "Brudder, yo' will hab success. Praise de Lawd!"

You then give a "donation" and go away satisfied that you will succeed. This very confidence gives you, perhaps, an impetus which helps you in your enterprise and the chances are that you return later and give the "voodoo" doctor another "donation."

Come From Carolina.

It is a remarkable fact that all the known colored "witch doctors," palmists, and astrologers in Washington are men originally from North Carolina.

The reason for the continual increase of belief in these various forms of superstition is not hard to find, according to Prince A. Hairston, popularly known as "Professor Prince," a colored palmist living at 236 Third street southeast. The "professor," also formerly a North Carolinian, while claiming not to be a "voodoo" or witch doctor, makes charms of several sorts for those in their power.

"While I do not pretend to know how much real virtue there is in these

charms themselves," said the "professor," "I am positive that, in a great many instances, I have thus helped persons through the effect on the mind, in the way of stimulating confidence in the outcome."

"I attribute the spread of superstition among the white and colored people of Washington," continued the "professor," who is a man of some education, "in a large measure to the discussion in press, magazine, pulpit, forum, and family of such subjects as hypnotism, spiritualism, mental healing, telepathy, and kindred subjects. All of these deal with almost inexplicable natural phenomena whose workings are not understood by the ordinary mind. Thus people are easily brought to believe in the power of all sorts of unseen influences."

The "professor" added that he found many of the colored residents of the city very superstitious, he alone receiving as many as from eight to ten calls a day from those who wished to consult him. He also made frequent visits to the homes of his "clients," including the houses of a number of wealthy and influential white persons of both sexes.

Case of Millionaire's Wife.

"A very wealthy woman, the wife of a Washington millionaire," said the "professor," "some time ago came to me and asked me to make her a charm of some sort which she could use in influencing her son, who, she believed, was not leading the sort of life she desired him to follow."

"I gave her one after hearing her story and she afterwards told me that the charm evidently had worked, as her son was living an upright life."

"Another case," went on the "professor," is that of a man prominent in the Postoffice Department, who frequently consults me on matters of moment. He always wears one of my little charms next his heart. See, this is one of them."

And the "professor" took from a drawer in his desk a small, heart-shaped bag of pale yellow leather, edged with blue silk. There was something hard inside.

"That's lodestone," explained the

palmist. "What virtue it contains I don't know, but there is a great demand for it for these charms. There is one firm of oculists here that makes a specialty of selling it to us. The lodestone in these charms is placed in a small quantity of sachet powder. That's all there is to them—except the belief in their power."

Charm Sold for \$45.

"I have sold hundreds of these little charms since I have been in the business, and I have received all the way from \$2.50 to \$45 for them. The highest price I ever received was from a race track man, at Benning; he gave me \$45. Sometimes I make a regular charge for the charms, \$2.50 cash, or \$5 on the installment plan."

"And do you know," he continued, "I have never had but two people bring them back, in all the years I have been selling them. Both of these fellows were from the country. They

came back and said that their charms didn't work, so I gave them back the money they had paid me."

One white woman of some means, said the "professor," had seen a young man at a theater in this city, with whom she had fallen in love at once. She called upon him and asked him to give her a charm that would make him return her sentiments. The professor claims to have come so. At another time a woman in deep distress came to his house and told him that her husband was in a rage and was about to pack up and leave. She asked him what she could do. The "professor" merely gave her a "powder" to burn in the house. The husband's anger immediately began to dwindle and before morning he had decided to remain with her forever.

Sometimes no money is asked out-right for these charms, instead the person receiving them has the right to wear them until they begin to "work," that being the cue for a small "donation." These "donations" are expected to continue until the price of the charm has been paid.

Heart Stuck With Pins.

Witch doctors are supposed to be able to concoct charms that can work both good and evil—but almost always the heart-shaped bag is used. If a



VOODOO DOCTOR WORKING CHARM.
Original Voodoo Rites Included the
Worship of a Snake.

colored girl wished to get her "beau" back from a rival, she would visit a "voodoo" doctor, who would give her one of these charms, with the advice to wish harm to her rival and at the same time stick the heart full of pins and burn it in places with matches. This would be sure to bring evil, according to the black necromancers. However, the doctor may, instead, give her a small straw effigy, representing the one to be "hoodooed." This is to be burned, accompanied by heart-felt "wishes" and incantation.

If you should ever find a hollowed-out acorn stuffed with the hair of a dead person and pierced with four holes on four sides and with two small chicken feathers drawn through them so as to cross inside, look out for yourself. According to the "voodoo" belief, this is one of the worst omens of bad luck that you can have. Somebody with a grudge against you may slip it under your bed.

But there is an antidote to all of these bad omens. You need have no fear of stuffed acorns, or hearts stuck full of pins or anything else, if you have a "frizzled" chicken. A "frizzled" chicken will work miracles in the way of protecting you from evil influences of all sorts. If you do not possess a "frizzled" chicken, you had better procure one as soon as possible, for there is no telling when you may need its friendly assistance.

A. Schenk, an aged colored cobbler, living on Seventh street, between L and M streets, is another colored man who makes charms for the superstitious. He claims to have helped a well-known clothing merchant of this

city rise from cheap store to affluence through one of his magic charms. Neighbors say he has a "Southern jack" in his house, but he vehemently denies this.

"I have lived 100 years and yet I never have seen any real good come by using a 'jack' or 'wheel,'" he said to a Sunday Times representative. "But I have seen lots of good worked through charms."

Assafoetida and dragon's blood! That is the combination which was found on the person of Francis E. Manuel, the white "hoodoo king" who was arrested about a week ago at Jefferson avenue and M street.

Manuel also had a small bottle containing what looked like camphor, and two small tin boxes of blood powder. The powerful dragon's blood was spattered over the backs of a deck of cards. With this extraordinary outfit Manuel is said to have been giving great consolation to colored people by driving out of their bodies troublesome "demons" and by quieting all the obnoxious spirits that he could find.

His work was not done merely for charity. He was always ready to accept a small fee, and so he has been given forty days in the workhouse.

Worship of the Snake.

According to the view once generally accepted, the "voodoo" was the name of an all-powerful being which assumed the shape of a snake, and who communicated with its worshippers through a priest and priestess known as "papa" and "mamma," who are held in the greatest veneration by its devotees. This is the old savage form of voodooism. These ceremonies at

PARIS DOCTOR FINDS GERM OF KLEPTOMANIA

THE French newspapers seem puzzled by the announcement that a Parisian physician has discovered that kleptomania is a germ disease of very wide prevalence, and that he has by a happy accident succeeded in isolating the microbes of it. Some of them took the proposition seriously at first, but now they are all poking fun at it.

The original yarn includes an account of the manufacture of an anti-germ-quick serum, and its application in a number of cases with astounding results. According to the story, about 150 drops of blood are taken from a vein in the arm of an undoubted gambler or swindler.

The sample is placed in a sterilized and hermetically sealed tube until the red corpuscles become separated from the serum. The latter is then put through a series of cultures in sterilized lymph, just as is done with the virus of hydrophobia, and finally it is brought to a degree of attenuation, where it is curative instead of stimulative. The details of the process, of course, "are as yet kept secret."

Seriously attracted by articles on the store counters or in her friends' parlors, or a gambler who tires of the same, or a promoter on the Bourse resolves to take the cure, two drops of the serum are subcutaneously injected. In simple cases a single treatment is said to render the patient immune against temptation for eight days. In difficult cases several inoculations are necessary to allay the itch of the palm.

Forty-eight speculators in wildcat securities are described as having lost all inclination to take flyers after applications of the serum varying from three to a dozen. Seven others, though not losing all interest in the ticker, still became conservative in treatment.

The papers are agitating the question in particular, the question of how the great discovery shall be utilized. No one man, they argue, could reach all the population who are in need of treatment, and with even a small royalty on his discovery he is bound to become the richest man in the world.

On the other hand, it is obviously out of the question to form a stock company to manufacture and administer the serum. The stock would have to be floated in the usual way, and as first it would be a purely speculative offering. The inconsistency of speculating in a scheme to kill speculation is obvious.

their operations and six weeks after treatment showed no tendency to relapse. Those who at first showed symptoms of back-sliding received heavier doses and responded in a satisfactory manner under this heroic treatment.

Washington up-to-date "voodooism" may be considered an expurgated edition of all this, though none the less "voodooism."

HOW IT HAPPENED.

"How does it happen," asked the portly dowager on the overland express, "that you have managed to keep the same cook for thirty years?"

"I married one," answered the chance acquaintance, shrugging her ample shoulders.—Chicago Tribune.